

National Emergency Communications Plan Provisions Applicable to State Governments

The National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) identifies the following objectives, initiatives and milestones that are relevant to States to improve emergency communications for Federal, State, local, and tribal emergency responders across the Nation. [Note: The majority of the NECP objectives, initiatives and milestones, which are not listed below, apply to the Federal government, not to the States. The NECP is posted at: http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/national_emergency_communications_plan.pdf]

Objective 1. Formal decision-making structures and clearly defined leadership roles coordinate emergency communications capabilities.

Initiative 1.1: Facilitate the development of effective governance groups and designated emergency communications leadership roles.

Milestone 1.1.2: Within 12 months, all States and Territories should establish full-time statewide interoperability coordinators or equivalent positions. (p.12)

Milestone 1.1.5: Within 12 months, SIECs (AZ SIEC = PSCC, SIEC and sub-committees) in all 56 States and Territories should incorporate the recommended membership as outlined in the SCIP Guidebook and should be established via legislation or executive order by an individual State's governor. (p.13)

Initiative 1.3: Integrate strategic and tactical emergency communications planning efforts across all levels of government. Tactical and strategic coordination will eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort and maximize interagency synchronization, bringing together tactical response and strategic planning.

Milestone 1.3.2: Within 12 months, tactical planning among Federal, State, local, and tribal governments occurs at the regional interstate level. (p.14)

Objective 3. Emergency responders employ common planning and operational protocols to effectively use their resources and personnel.

***Initiative 3.1: Standardize and implement common operational protocols and procedures.** A national adoption of plain-language radio practices and uniform common channel naming, along with the programming and use of existing national interoperability channels, will allow agencies across all disciplines to effectively share information on demand and in real time. Using common operational protocols and procedures avoids the confusion that the use of disparate coded language systems and various tactical interoperability frequencies can create. Use of the existing nationwide interoperability channels with common naming will immediately address interoperability requirements for agencies operating in the same frequency band.*

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Milestone 3.1.6: Within 18 months, DHS develops training and technical assistance programs for the National Interoperability Field Operations Guide (NIFOG); (Footnote 26) programs an appropriate set of frequency / band-specific nationwide interoperability channels into all existing emergency responder radios; (Footnote 27) and preprograms an appropriate set of frequency / band-specific nationwide interoperability channels into emergency response radios that are manufactured or purchased through Federal funding as a standard requirement. (p. 22)

Footnote 27 states: Milestones in this area refer to the programming of an “appropriate set” of interoperability channels. This language is used in recognition that most radios used by emergency responders do not have the capacity to hold all of the national interoperability channels in addition to their required operational channels. Some radio channels are discipline-specific and are inappropriate to program in radios of other disciplines.

Milestone 3.1.7: Within 24 months, all SCIPs reflect plans to eliminate coded substitutions throughout the ICS, and agencies incorporate the use of existing nationwide interoperability channels into SOPs, training, and exercises at the Federal, State, regional, local, and tribal levels. (p. 22)

Initiative 3.2: Implementation of the NIMS and the NRF across all levels of government. Emergency response agencies across all levels of government should adopt and implement national-level policies and guidance to ensure a common approach to incident management and communications support. Implementation of these policies will establish clearly defined communications roles and responsibilities and enable integration of all communications elements as the ICS structure expands from the incident level to the national level.

Milestone 3.2.1: Within 12 months, all Federal, State, local, and tribal emergency response providers within UASI jurisdictions have implemented the Communications and Information Management section of the NIMS. (p.22)

Objective 7. The Nation has integrated preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery capabilities to communicate during significant events.

Initiative 7.2: Implement disaster communications planning and preparedness activities. Identifying critical communications vulnerabilities and developing mitigation strategies is important for all agencies with operational responsibilities during major events. Agencies should evaluate the readiness posture of communications centers (e.g., Public Safety Answering Points [PSAP]) and emergency response and commercial networks that may be vulnerable to weather damage, flooding, and man-made disasters. The vulnerabilities identified should be a primary focus of disaster planning and preparedness activities. System planning activities should account for the availability of alternative and backup communications solutions and redundant pathways (i.e., provided by different vendors) to support communications if primary capabilities become unavailable.

Milestone 7.2.4: Within 24 months, complete disaster communications training and exercises for all 56 States and Territories. (p. 36)

Milestone 7.2.5: Within 24 months, all Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies in UASIs have defined alternate/backup capabilities in emergency communications plans. (p. 37)